



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 12**

January Session, 2017

House Bill No. 6988

*House of Representatives, March 2, 2017*

The Committee on Aging reported through REP. SERRA of the 33rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

**AN ACT INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR  
GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER NONPARENT RELATIVES WHO ARE  
RAISING CHILDREN.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17b-112 of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective*  
3 *October 1, 2017*):

4 (a) (1) The Department of Social Services shall administer a  
5 temporary family assistance program under which cash assistance  
6 shall be provided to eligible families in accordance with the temporary  
7 assistance for needy families program, established pursuant to the  
8 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
9 1996. The Commissioner of Social Services may operate portions of the  
10 temporary family assistance program as a solely state-funded  
11 program, separate from the federal temporary assistance for needy  
12 families program, if the commissioner determines that doing so will  
13 enable the state to avoid fiscal penalties under the temporary

14 assistance for needy families program. Families receiving assistance  
15 under the solely state-funded portion of the temporary family  
16 assistance program shall be subject to the same conditions of eligibility  
17 as those receiving assistance under the federal temporary assistance for  
18 needy families program. Under the temporary family assistance  
19 program, benefits shall be provided to a family for not longer than  
20 twenty-one months, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of  
21 this section. For the purpose of calculating said twenty-one-month  
22 time limit, months of assistance received on and after January 1, 1996,  
23 pursuant to time limits under the aid to families with dependent  
24 children program, shall be included. For purposes of this section,  
25 "family" means one or more individuals who apply for or receive  
26 assistance together under the temporary family assistance program. If  
27 the commissioner determines that federal law allows individuals not  
28 otherwise in an eligible covered group for the temporary family  
29 assistance program to become covered, such family may also, at the  
30 discretion of the commissioner, be composed of [(1)] (A) a pregnant  
31 woman, or [(2)] (B) a parent, both parents or other caretaker relative  
32 and at least one child who is under the age of eighteen, or who is  
33 under the age of nineteen and a full-time student in a secondary school  
34 or its equivalent. A caretaker relative shall be related to the child or  
35 children by blood, marriage or adoption or shall be the legal guardian  
36 of such a child or pursuing legal proceedings necessary to achieve  
37 guardianship. If the commissioner elects to allow state eligibility  
38 consistent with any change in federal law, the commissioner may  
39 administratively transfer any qualifying family cases under the cash  
40 assistance portion of the state-administered general assistance  
41 program to the temporary family assistance program without regard  
42 to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures. If such families become  
43 an ineligible coverage group under the federal law, the commissioner  
44 shall administratively transfer such families back to the cash assistance  
45 portion of the state-administered general assistance program without  
46 regard to usual eligibility and enrollment procedures to the degree that  
47 such families are eligible for the state program.

48 (2) To the extent permissible under federal law, the payment

49 standard for a family that receives benefits under the temporary family  
50 assistance program and in which the head of the household is a  
51 nonparent caretaker relative and the legal guardian of a child shall be  
52 equal to seventy-five per cent of the applicable monthly foster care rate  
53 paid by the Department of Children and Families.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

|           |                 |            |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| Section 1 | October 1, 2017 | 17b-112(a) |
|-----------|-----------------|------------|

**AGE**      *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

### **OFA Fiscal Note**

#### **State Impact:**

| Agency Affected        | Fund-Effect | FY 18 \$     | FY 19 \$     |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Social Services, Dept. | GF - Cost   | 14.8 Million | 14.8 Million |

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

#### **Explanation**

The bill will result in a cost to the Department of Social Services' (DSS), Temporary Family Assistance Program (TFA) to increase the payment standard for families whose head of household is (1) a nonparent caretaker relative and (2) the legal guardian of a child to 75% of a foster care rate. The bill does not specify which category of foster care reimbursement rate the TFA payment standard will be indexed to. Assuming the average monthly foster care rate of \$828, the bill will result in an increased annual cost to the DSS of approximately \$14.8 million<sup>1</sup>. Current, average monthly TFA rates for family units range from \$366 for a family with one child to \$700 for a family with three or more children. The cost to the state will be more if the foster care rate is based on the need of the child, which is not specified in the bill. The average monthly foster care rate for children requiring more intensive care is approximately \$4,525.

The actual cost will depend on two factors (1) the number of individuals impacted and (2) the foster care rate used as the basis for the TFA payment.

#### **The Out Years**

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<sup>1</sup> Foster care rate reflects the average FY 17 monthly foster care rate for ages 0-5, 6-11, and 12 years and over as of January 2017 with average level of need.

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to (1) the number of individuals impacted and (2) the foster care rate used as the basis for the TFA payment.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 6988*****AN ACT INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER NONPARENT RELATIVES WHO ARE RAISING CHILDREN.*****SUMMARY**

This bill generally increases the temporary family assistance (TFA) payment to families with a head of household who is (1) a nonparent caretaker relative (e.g., grandparent) and (2) the legal guardian of a child. It does this by making the TFA payment 75% of the prevailing monthly foster care rate for families with the same number of children.

Generally, nonparent caretaker relatives may qualify for financial assistance through the departments of children and families (DCF) or social services (DSS). Those who become guardians of foster children through DCF (i.e. Subsidized Guardianship Program) receive a larger payment than those who are guardians of children not involved in the child welfare system and receive a TFA payment for the child from DSS.

DCF payments equal the prevailing monthly foster care rate, which varies based on the child's age and medical condition. TFA payments vary by family size and geographic region. By fixing TFA payments to foster care rates, which do not vary geographically, the bill eliminates regional variation in payments to such families.

The bill also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2017

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Aging Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea     13     Nay   0     (02/14/2017)